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AUTHOR Chen, Yueh-miao
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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the perceptions of college students from three different cultural groups in English composition courses concerning writing and effective writing instruction. Subjects were native speakers of American English, natives of South Korea, and natives of Mexico. Data were collected through classroom observation and in systematic interviews with the students and with two program administrators and two teachers. Analysis of the data focused on: (1) factors affecting the writing development of college students (educational background, family environment, cultural influence, and individual factors such as personality, intellectual tendency, and learning strategies); and (2) factors in effective writing instruction. In the latter category, two phases in effective instruction emerged: the teacher's contributions (attitude, subject matter knowledge, skills in organizing instruction, teaching competence, student evaluation, and classroom management) and student efforts (regular practice, purposeful personal efforts to learn, beyond class assignments). A considerable difference was found between native and non-native speakers of English in their writing development, reflecting cultural influences in writing styles and thought content, but no significant difference was found in contextual influences, individual factors, or perceptions of effective writing instruction. (MSE)

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THE WRITING DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS
AND EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

by

Yueh-miao Chen

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature

National Chung Cheng University

Chia-yi, Taiwan, R. O. C.

June 30, 1994

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The Writing Development of College Students and Effective Instruction

ABSTRACT

Yueh-miao Chen, Associate Professor
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
National Chung Cheng University
Chia-yi, Taiwan, R. O. C.

This study investigates the writing development of native and nonnative English speaking college students in required English composition classes. The study examines how students from different cultural groups perceive writing and effective writing instruction as well as their attitudes toward writing and their self-concept as writers. The purpose is to identify factors affecting their writing development and to describe effective writing instruction for students enrolled in university composition courses from multiple perspectives.

A qualitative approach was utilized to conduct this study. Data were collected from systematic interviews with the following three groups of subjects: four native English speakers from ENG 102, and eight nonnative English speakers, four Koreans and four Mexicans, from ENG 108. Four interviews with each subject were held systematically through the fall semester, 1991, while the students were attending the ENG 102, ENG 108 classes. The Director and Assistant Director of the First Year Composition Program, and two instructors of ENG 102 and ENG 108 constituted another group of interviewees who provided their perceptions about writing, the writing program, and native and nonnative writers. Data were also collected from observation of classes in which students enrolled.

Through this study, the relationship between instruction and writing development is revealed, and the factors affecting writing development of college writers are identified. Perceptions of native and nonnative speakers in effective writing instruction and essence of effective writing instruction are also discussed.

This descriptive study may contribute to writing pedagogy by increasing academics' understanding of the writing development processes of native and nonnative writers at college level and, as a result, benefit the college student writers. The study also demonstrates a direction for writing research that goes beyond product-based and process-based research.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the college composition classes, no matter whether for native or nonnative students, those who teach freshman composition have always observed the frustration among students who are struggling to express their ideas with words and sentences. For native students, they encounter problems not only in generating ideas and organizing them into a coherent paper, but also in grammatical structure and word usage. For nonnative students, they have to struggle with the limitation of grammatical knowledge and vocabulary as well as the unfamiliar social and cultural environments.

This study is designed to investigate the writing development of native and nonnative English speaking students from cultural, contextual, and affective perspectives in order to discover the underlying factors which enhance or impede the growth of writing ability. It also attempts to define effective writing instruction through the perceptions of native and nonnative college writers. The main research questions to be answered by this study are 1) What factors affect the writing development of college students? 2) What makes effective writing instruction?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Composition Research

About thirty years ago, the "field" of composition started coming into being as "Composition" research. In 1963, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

published its first survey of composition research, Research in Written Composition, to encourage research in the field of composition (Lundsteen, 1976). The authors, Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer reviewed 504 composition studies and found that most of the research consisted of error counts and comparative studies of teaching methods. Many assumptions remained unchallenged. The authors outlined basic problems in conducting research in composition and showed researchers how to define the structure and techniques of their studies. They also suggested that researchers work on "What is involved in the act of writing?" (Hillocks, 1986). In 1967, NTCE also began publishing a journal, Research in the Teaching of English.

As a direct consequence, composition researchers began to question their assumptions in the late '60s and early '70s. Composition teachers and researchers were meeting, doing research, and writing about student writing processes in an attempt to answer the question: "How do students write?" and develop a pedagogy relevant to the essentials of writing. Writing processes, then, emerged as a new focus of the field.

In their New Directions in Composition Research, Beach and Bridwell (1984) define composition research as the investigation of writing behaviors, cognitive processes during composing, and the ways in which these behaviors and cognitive processes interact with written products and their contexts. Composition researchers are concerned with the actual production of written language, and they study the writing and writing processes of all kinds of people of all ages.

As Brannon (1985) describes, composition draws together literary critics, psychologists, linguists, educators on all levels, rhetoricians, learning theorists, and

philosophers in a common concern for composing in writing. Composition research is a "multidisciplinary entity" -- a field is particularly concerned with answering "a set of significant questions" (Farr, 1985, p.viii):

1. What is the nature of the composing process?
2. How does one develop from an inexperienced to a mature writer?
3. How can schools, particularly teachers of writing, assist the development of writers? (Brannon, 1985, p.6)

L2 Composition and L2 Writers

Just as in L1 composition research, an interdisciplinary base is important in examining issues in L2 writing, for no single theory from a single discipline can account for the complex and interacting social, cultural, cognitive, and linguistic processes involved. According to the above definition of writing, the L2 writer is, then, viewed as a traveler through discourse communities (Johnson & Roen, 1989), and L2 composition is also treated as a distinct area of study and teaching.

A broader theoretical base is also crucial for teachers, as L2 writing instruction has become more integrated with content teaching and the development of intellectual abilities. Research on process, on text, on content, and research on the complex interactions among social, cultural, cognitive, linguistic, and contextual factors all contribute to the understanding of L2 writing development and teaching (Johnson et al. 1989).

III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The Subjects

There were three groups of student subjects: native speakers of American English, two male and two female; nonnative English speakers from South Korea, two male and two female; and nonnative English speakers from Mexico, two male and two female. The subjects were undergraduate students in a large state university who were taking ENG 102 and ENG 108 courses of the First Year Composition Program during the fall semester of 1991.

Research Process

The systematic structured interview has been the main method used to collect the data for this study. The interviews with the subjects were conducted systematically every three or four weeks in four stages through the fall semester, 1991. Totally, there were forty-eight interviews with the students through the whole semester.

The first interview dealt with personal background information such as age, major, academic plan, previous schooling experience. The second interview was conducted after four weeks of classroom observation, and after students had completed two or three writing assignments. The interview asked the subjects to define themselves as writers and explain what factors contributed to their being good or bad writers. They were also

asked about how they felt about the class and whether they had made progress. A survey of writing apprehension was also completed in this interview.

Following the second period of classroom observation, the third interview was conducted to ask the students to identify their writing problems and how they made efforts to improve their writing ability. They also stated their perceptions of effective instructions. The fourth interview aimed to find out their evaluations of themselves and the class instruction. The subjects described their difficulties and how to overcome them in completing the term papers, what they learned, and what progress they had made through the teaching of the class.

The second technique of collecting data was to participate in both classes, ENG 102 and ENG 108, to observe "what is going on" (Walsh, 1986, p.2) in the composition class, such as the interaction between the instructor and students, the instructional approach, the assignment guidance, the classroom dynamic. There were two stages of observation: the first period spanned the first four weeks of the semester; the second session covered week eight through week ten.

Data Analysis

Based on the tradition of grounded theory that analyzing procedures and assumptions of qualitative research often remain implicit in earlier statements, there are no preconceived hypotheses in the beginning of the study. The research process is inductive; original questions are broad and the decisions concerning what to focus on

emerge from the data gradually along the course of time (Walsh, 1986). The report tends to provide a substantive account to illustrate the main concepts. Researchers check their developing ideas to collect further specific data and make systematic comparisons to achieve "conceptual density" (Struss, 1987, p.20). Following such guidance, the investigator of this study took written notes at participant observations. Some limited written notes were taken at each individual interview as the session was tape recorded. After each interview, data on the tapes were transcribed. All data collected from interviews and observation were categorized and memos were written. Consecutive interview data were compared to those gathered at the previous interview; then, categorized. Systematic comparative analysis was employed to deal with the data. The continuous memoing process helped develop main concepts and establish core categories. A member check of data was conducted before the final report was written for the interviews and observation.

IV. RESULTS

Core Categories

In order to draw a complete picture of these college students' process of developing their writing, this paper first should have reported the subjects' personal background information, their previous English and writing instruction, personal attitudes toward writing, self-images as writers and cultural and contextual influences at home and

at school. It also should have delineated their gradual writing development during the semester case by case. However, limited by the space, this paper will directly synthesize information around the two main themes; i.e., factors affecting writing development and the essence of effective writing instruction.

Factors Affecting Writing Development of College Writers

Contextual Influence Schooling. Previous and Current Instruction

Writing is a cognitive and linguistic activity, in which students develop their conceptual and language ability. It also serves a social and cultural purpose which enculturizes students into the social life of their communities, academic worlds, and workplaces. There has been a recognition that an adequate control of writing is essential for the advancement of all students. Effective writing is the key to academic and professional success. Writing is a social and cultural activity. A writer develops his writing skills in schools; and schools' instruction responds to the social expectations and needs. Thus, students actually develop their writing ability within a society. College students, then, come to freshman writing courses with abilities and perceptions developed under the interactions of their previous schooling experiences and family environment (Bloom, 1985; Ackerman, 1990; McCormick, 1990).

In this study, Rick, John, Chae, Lisa, and Ines pointed out that they did not have good English instruction in high school. As a result, Rick was bothered by fragmented

sentences and summarizing the main points of an article; John repeated ENG 102 three times; Chae did not have confidence in writing English before taking ENG 101; Lisa felt something was missing in her high school English class; and Ines always struggled in generating ideas and putting them on paper. Moreover, Rick, John, Chae, and Lisa complained that the teachers did not care very much. Ines noted that the English program in her high school was not good. All of them said that they did not learn writing very much from their high school English class; and most of them identified grammar and mechanics as their most difficult writing problems. However, Jane had a very impressive English writing class in senior high school, which she enjoyed very much and felt very interested in writing restaurant reviews, etc. The class seemed to initiate her writing interest and nurture her ability, although she only likes to write on topics in which she has an interest.

Although they did not learn writing very well in high school, they did learn it from freshman English courses. Rick, John, Chae learned how to write mostly from ENG 101. From ENG 101, they gradually learned how to write and discovered their own strengths. Rick gained confidence through the teacher's recognition of his creative ideas; John learned from talking to the instructor after class; Chae built up his confidence by working hard and practicing. At the same time, Lisa, Jose, and Cho learned writing from the ENG 107. Lisa was very disappointed with her high school English teachers, but felt very satisfied with the ENG 107 class and learned much about how to write from this class taken at a community college. Jose is from Mexico. His high school English

class was just grammar practice and learning vocabulary. He also learned most of English writing skills from his ENG 107 class.

In Lee's and Cho's cases, when they were in South Korea and attended elementary school, they were requested to keep daily diaries. Lee admits that the mandatory diary writing helped him maintain a writing habit, though he hated it at that time. Even now, he still keeps a diary, writing down what he feels every day.

In addition, most of the subjects reported that they have learned how to write a research paper, as well as to organize and present ideas in an acceptable style, after one semester of ENG 102, or ENG 108 instruction. At the beginning of the class some of them were very negative toward writing. Ann, for example, was extremely anxious about writing assignments and thought the class was a waste of time. Jane did not like the topics of summary assignments, and Jose did not really like personal writing in class, but preferred to have more practice on academic assignments. The most important factor is that they gained competence in doing research as well as in writing an organized research paper based on background text sources, and now each feels he will benefit from this training for the rest of his life because each still needs to do research and write reports from time to time.

It is clear that school has played a major role in the subjects' writing development, either positively or negatively. Good and responsible writing instruction has facilitated the writing ability of students and built up their confidence and competence, while poor instruction has caused detrimental results which the subjects have had to overcome by much effort.

Family Environment

Besides schooling influence, family environment plays an extremely significant role in one's growth in various aspects. It might not be exaggerating to say that each individual is a product of one family. In this study, family influences were noted in the path of the subjects' writing development, too.

For example, John's writing growth benefited more from his mother as an English teacher than from other teachers. Jane's parents liked reading and encouraged her to read, too; meanwhile, because of family teaching, she grew up to believe that she definitely needed to go to college.

Among the Korean subjects, as a child Lee was encouraged to read books by his older brother, so he loved reading and enjoyed writing. Woo's parents are highly educated. As a result, she reads magazines and newspapers often and grew up in an environment believing that she had to go to graduate school. As for Chae, he tried to become Americanized and keep his Korean culture at a distance in order to speak and write better in English. This may be due to family influence, too, because his mother remarried an American.

Jose's parents are highly educated and he grew up in an environment filled with books; consequently, he naturally learned to locate information and do research if he felt interested in something. A positive impact on him is that he is very confident in his writing, either in Spanish or in English. Raul's father used to own a bookstore, so he read often in his childhood, though he did not like to write. However, his determination

to go to graduate school probably has something to do with his love of reading. In Lisa's case, her parents bought books for her when she was a child, which seemed to encourage her love of reading fiction and literature, and writing journals and letters; as a consequence, she likes writing and can enjoy it. As for Ines, though she is not good at writing and cannot enjoy it, she was taught Spanish at home by her mother and is able to write Spanish letters to family and relatives in Mexico; meanwhile, she sees writing as a basic need to go around the world.

There are negative examples, too. Rick, for example, was the youngest child of his family. His parents were working, and brothers and sisters were considerably older than he, and busy with their own lives. Therefore, the family nurturing environment for his studying was not there. This might be part of the reason why he is still suffering from grammatical problems in his writing.

To summarize, these examples show that most of the subjects' reading habit and writing orientation has to do with family influence.

Cultural Influence

Writing serves different functions in various socio-cultural context. It is always used as a communicative tool among a cultural group. Any writing activity, the communicative interaction, takes place in a defined context (Whiteman & Hall, 1981). Writing functions differently for various cultural groups (Hudelson, 1989). As a result,

an individual's writing development is tremendously influenced by the culture or community in which he lives.

In this study, without exceptions, it was discovered that cultural factors played a role in the writing development of college writers; especially the English writing development of nonnative writers.

There is a big difference between native writers and nonnative writers in terms of their perceptions of writing. In writing an assignment, all four Korean subjects reported that they summarized the main points of one article, then reflected on their own experiences to relate to the main point, and finally included their viewpoints in the summary. However, for American and Mexican subjects, when they wrote a summary, nobody reported that they included their own thinking as part of the summary assignment. They just summarized what was in the article objectively. Moreover, three Korean subjects, Lee, Chae, and Cho expressed that they like to write down what they feel and what they think. Though Woo did not report that she likes to write what she feels or thinks, she likes to relate her own experiences to what she is writing; meanwhile, she always keeps a personal journal. She also mentions that most of the Korean writers like to describe their feelings in a very detailed way. Three of them, Lee, Woo, and Cho, keep a diary or journal to write something regularly. However, in the American and Mexican groups, there is only one subject, Lisa, reporting that she kept a journal in high school. It seems that the difference is between oriental and western perceptions of writing. Korean students tend to write more subjectively, enjoying expressing their personal feelings and thinking when writing, even including their thinking in a summary

assignment, which is supposed to be written in a very objective style, just reporting what is the main point said by the author. On the contrary, the American and Mexican subjects, representing western cultures, just write what they have to write without personal thinking and reflecting in a summary assignment.

In addition, Jose says that every time he writes, he tends to use more elaborate words, which he attributes to his own Mexican cultural influence, because in Mexico people like to be more stylistic in their writing, using more complicated words in their formal writing and lectures. He says that even though he knows what he writes sometimes is not common to American usage, he still writes it in that way purposely to be more specific, keep his own style and attract the attention of the instructors. This phenomenon corroborates the statement that for writers of Romance languages like French or Spanish, elaboration, using the language beautifully is essential to the successful presentation of written material (Reid, 1989). In completing his research paper, he chose a Mexican painter to study, and he says his interpretation and viewpoint of the paper are definitely influenced by his own culture, though he can not exactly explicate in what specific ways he is influenced.

Raul also chose an Latin American painter to be the subject of his life study paper. He also reported that he absolutely will not forget where he comes from just because he is somewhere else. With a different cultural background, he has different things in his mind; certainly what he writes would be different. Lisa and Ines, educated in America since elementary school, learned to read and write English first. However, they also have tried to learn literacy of their native language, Spanish. Meanwhile, Lisa

points out that it is one of her own cultural influences that she used to write long letters to her family and relatives instead of calling them up.

Among the Korean subjects, Woo represents one of the most apparent cases of cultural influence in her writing. Woo can not identify with the English language and the English language is a skill which she has to learn for her future, but she is not happy with it. She keeps on emphasizing that English is not her life, not her choice. She must learn it, but as a result, English writing is not of importance to her. She has a very practical view about it, i.e., English is necessary for her future, she will take a course repeatedly for an "A" grade, but she is tired of a seemingly endless learning, because she can not identify with it. Her native Korean culture, she says, has a great bond with her writing because when she writes she thinks about her country and culture. Lee also describes that though he is writing in English, he still deals with his own Korean culture, talking about his own culture in his English writing. His cultural background provides much content for his English writing; his culture is really a rich resource for him to write on. Although Chae does not think that his own culture has anything to do with his writing, his hard working to get an "A" grade seems to have something to do with his Korean cultural background. Meanwhile, he sees education as very valuable, which is probably also a value from his culture.

All four Korean subjects chose western persons as their "life study" research paper's topic; for example, Lee chose the great physicist, Galileo; Woo chose the American writer, Edgar Alan Poe; Cho chose one of the impressionist painters. Nobody chose a figure related to their cultural background. This phenomenon is probably due to

the distance between Korean culture and western culture. Probably very few Korean historical figures have been written about in English and the students could not find enough English materials about their own history and historical figures.

On the other hand, because English is not a first language of the nonnative writers, they are more conscious of their writing weaknesses and more aggressive about taking some actions to improve their writing skills compared to the American group, especially for the Korean group. They do not take English for granted, as American subjects do, and tend to have higher writing apprehension. They seem more hardworking, eager to get a good grade. At the end of the semester, a "B" grade seemed satisfactory to the American subjects such as John; however, it was very disappointing for Korean subjects such as Chae and Woo.

In terms of classroom interaction, the two Mexican males, the two Mexican females, and the two Korean females associated with each other through the whole semester. On the contrary, in the native class, ENG 102, there was no such phenomenon. In class discussions, very few of the nonnative subjects in this study spoke so freely and voluntarily in public as American subjects did. These are seen as cultural phenomena, too.

Individual Factors

On a smaller scale, writing is also influenced by personal disposition, intellectuality, learning tendency, temperamental and emotional factors. Bloom (1985)

describes these characteristics as internal features. In general, these factors are more related to personal nature and talent. However, some of these factors also have their larger scale impacts from schooling and surrounding environment.

In this study, it was noticed that writing has much to do with personal reading habits. For example, one of American subjects, Jane, reads often, and she also likes writing and can enjoy writing, which may have something to do with her reading habit. A Korean subject, Lee, likes writing either in English or in Korean. His enjoyment of writing is a result of his reading habit. Woo likes to read magazines and journals, especially literature. Consequently, when she writes, she tries to imitate the famous writers of literature and put herself in the writers' position to write. It is apparent that she has been influenced greatly by what she read. Lisa enjoys reading fictions, stories; she enjoys writing, too.

In terms of intellectuality and learning tendency, Ines can be an example to illustrate this point. She feels that she does not have talent in writing and always struggles with writing. Actually, she is a mathematics major and her talent seems to be mostly in number-related subjects.

Meanwhile, Cho and Ines report that they do not read very much. They state that their writing problems and anxiety about writing are probably because of their inadequacy in reading.

There are some other affective factors, too, such as anxiety, writing apprehension, hating to be evaluated, freedom of choice, and space for generating ideas. Jane and Lee dislike to be forced to write. Ann, Cho, Raul, and Ines are all high apprehension

writers; they worry very much when writing. Lee, Woo, Cho, Raul, and Ines all hate to be graded and evaluated; therefore, they like free writing in which they are not afraid of making grammatical mistakes; they are just writing down what they think and feel to generate ideas.

An interesting topic is very important to some of the subjects. Thus, it constitutes one aspect of individual factors. Jane repeatedly emphasized that she only writes well on a topic in which she has an interest. Woo prefers to have more choices in the category of writing on some subject. Jose considers free choices of the topic as important to a good paper. Lisa thinks that students should have space to generate ideas and choose their own subject. Apparently, some freedom in writing class elicits students' interest and motivation.

It is clear that some individual factors such as reading habits and personal disposition overlap with the contextual influence of family environment. They can be interpreted in different scales.

Table 1

Factors Affecting the Writing Development of College Writers

Contextual Influences: Schooling/Previous and Current

Instruction, Family Environment

+

Cultural Influences: Positive or Negative = Writing Development

+

Individual Factors: Interest/Motivation, Intellectuality, Language Competence,
Disposition, Affective Factors

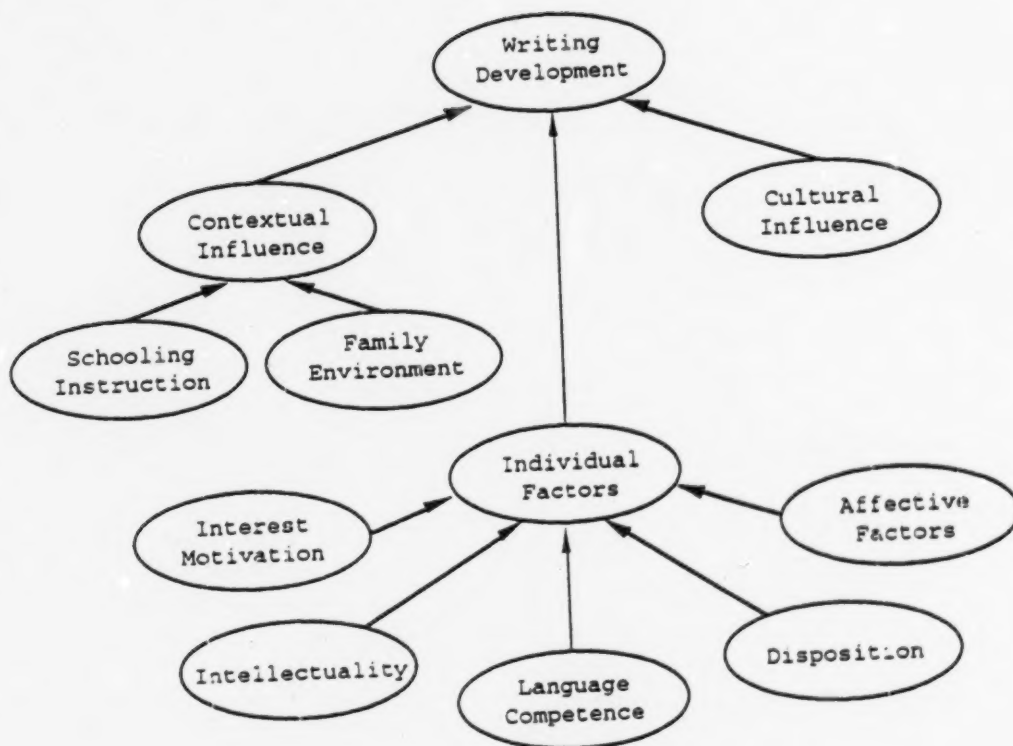


Figure 1: The factors affecting the writing development of college writers

The Essence of Effective Writing Instruction

As the interviews revealed, effective writing instruction is achieved through the caring of the teacher, good interaction and real involvement between the teacher and students as well as among students, clear instructions and directions on how to write by teaching and by showing examples, specific comments and feedback to identify individual problems, regular practice of writing and much free writing, free choice on topics, and peer review.

This section discusses the essence of effective writing instruction. Clearly, there are two phases, which must be integrated and interactive in order to accomplish the effectiveness. Phase one lies in the accomplishment of the teacher; while phase two depends on the efforts of the students. There will be no effective writing instruction if either phase is absent.

Phase One: Efforts Made by the Teacher

To be specific, phase one covers the teacher's attitude, knowledge of the subject matter, skills in organizing the materials for the course to meet the objectives of the course, competence in teaching the materials, evaluating students' assignments, and managing the classroom. The attitude, knowledge, and competence of the teacher are the same for both native and nonnative students.

Attitude

One of the principles of being a good teacher is to have a personality with enthusiasm toward teaching and with warm concern and hard discipline toward students. A good teacher must be really concerned with students' growth in terms of both the subject matter and their personal development; that is, he/she should be able to help students grow in knowledge as well as in personality. Thus, the interaction between the teacher and students occurs not only in class but also out of the class; even after class, this interaction continues to occur and the relationship stays strong in or out of the class. If a teacher shows real concern about students' problems in content learning, and if possible in their lives in general, then he/she will gain the trust of students. Afterwards, the teaching goal is easily achieved through interaction based on the mutual trust. This necessary characteristic of being a teacher is pinpointed by Rick, John, Ann, Jane, and Lisa in this study. All of them emphasize the importance of this attribute, and probably this attitude would be vital, not only in English class, but across all other classes. In a word, a teacher should be able to play a role as a counselor or a nurturer of students' growth.

Knowledge

Secondly, effective instruction is created by the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, the competence to convey this knowledge to students, as well as to create good

dynamics in the classroom between the teacher and students and among students. In other words, it is mandatory that a teacher should be knowledgeable in the subject he/she teaches. Without mastering the body of the knowledge in his/her field, a teacher can not achieve his teaching task effectively; as a result, the teaching mission can not carried out well.

Competence in Presentation

However, with the necessary knowledge, a teacher still needs the techniques and skills to present efficiently what he/she knows to students, which depends on his/her ability to perform in the classroom. Meanwhile, he/she must be able to manage the classroom activities, such as class discussion, group discussion, peer review, debate, asking and answering questions, etc., to keep a fluent dynamic and have an interesting class, which will attract and focus the concentration of students. To accomplish this mission, a teacher plays the role of scholar, instructor, performer, evaluator, guider, and manipulator. This part of the task is carried out mainly inside the classroom by giving clear instructions and directions on how to write along with samples and hand-outs. This task is also carried out partly outside of the class as the instructor provides necessary feedback to students' papers by grading papers, identifying personal problems, correcting errors, and showing how to write appropriately. In a writing class, along with good presentation of the body of knowledge in the field, such as conventions, styles, rhetoric, writing process of how to go about writing, critical reading skills, grammar and

mechanics, etc., many regular reading and writing assignments for practicing after class, and personal writing and journal writing in class are crucially important. There would be no effectiveness in writing instruction without students' practice following the teaching actions.

This paramount qualification of a writing teacher is emphasized by most of the subjects such as Ann, John, Lee, Cho, Jose, Raul, Lisa, and Ines. All of them think clear instructions and directions is very important for effective writing instruction.

Phase Two: Efforts Made by Students

Phase two represents the efforts made by students. Without the students' efforts, there would be no accomplishment of writing instruction, especially for writing classes, because practice results in improvement.

Motivation and Hardworking: The Mandatory Reading and Writing

Students need to make a concerted effort to practice their writing regularly through assignments, and through free writing and journal writing. The free writing and journal writing would help improve the fluency of the language, get the language flow; while the regular assignment of essay or paper writing would help students practice the conventions, such as summary, contrast, analysis, and synthesis, to gain a mastery of

academic writing, which should prepare them for the academic community and future career.

Determination/Perseverance: Individualized Efforts

Besides these mandatory efforts required for a freshman writing class, students still need individualized efforts, such as pleasure-reading, purposeful reading in grammar books, utilizing the writing of others, utilizing mechanics guidebooks, or keeping a personal journal or diary. All these are personal efforts out of the class in addition to the class requirements. They are not mandatory; however, the more one practices reading and writing, the more competence one gains in expressing himself and presenting his knowledge by writing.

To summarize, the two phases of effective writing instruction interact recursively. The more efforts a teacher makes, the more encouragement students will have, which should influence their interest and efforts. Then, the more progress students make, the more feedback a teacher would have, which should rejuvenate his energy and enthusiasm about teaching.

Table 2

A Coding Procedure of the Essence of Effective Writing InstructionPHASE ONE: The Efforts Made by the Teacher

C: Categorize as an abstract conception		B: Label a concrete role	A: Identify concrete events
Essence	Role	Action	Location
Attitude	Counselor	Caring toward students	In class
	Nurturer	Enthusiasm toward teaching	After class
Knowledge	Scholar	The body of knowledge of the subject such as conventions, rhetoric, style, critical reading and writing process	In class
Competence	a) Instructor	Clear instruction and directions on how to write along with hand-outs and samples	In class
	b) Evaluator	Grade assignments, identify personal problems, correct errors and show how to write right	After class
Performance	Guider Manipulator	Manipulate the classroom activities such as class discussion, group discussion, debate, peer review, etc. to create good classroom dynamics and to keep the class interesting	In class

PHASE TWO: The Efforts Made by Students

Motivation/ Hardworking	Learner as a reader/ writer	<u>Mandatory reading and writing</u> assignments and free or journal writing	In class After class
Determination/ Perseverance	Self-educator	<u>Individualized efforts</u> in pleasure-reading, purposeful readings in grammar books, others' work, mechanics guidebook, and rhetorical books; writing practice in personal journals or diaries.	After class

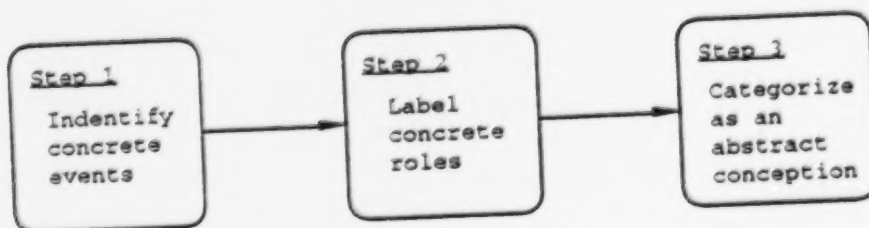


Figure 2: A coding procedure of the essence of effective writing instruction

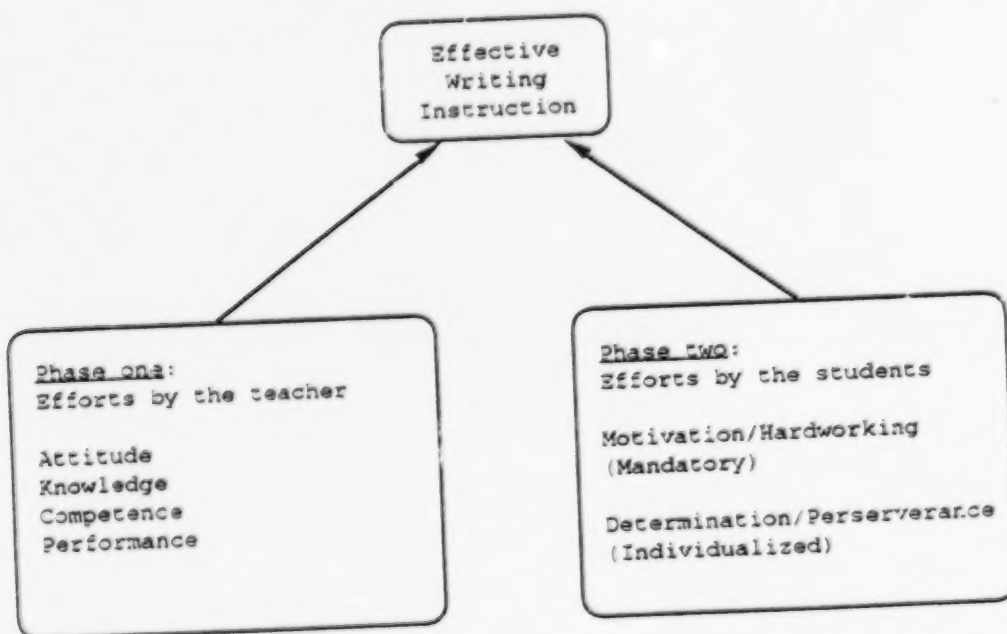


Figure 3: Essence of effective writing instruction

V. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion and Recommendations

As previously discussed, there is a big difference between native and nonnative writers in their writing development in regard to cultural influence in terms of writing styles and thinking content; however, there is no big difference in the contextual influences such as family environments and school instruction, in individual factors, and in perceptions of effective writing instruction. In their writing problems, it is clear there are some differences between native and nonnative writers, for example, content and organization are strengths of the Korean subjects.

In terms of cultural influence, nonnative writers comment that they bring their cultural backgrounds into their writing, so they have more confidence in the content of writing. At the same time, even when writing in English, they still deal with their own cultures when choosing some topics to write about; they also feel this is an advantage to them. However, on the other hand, because English is not their native language, it is always threatening for them when facing grammar, syntactical structures, vocabulary, and idiomatic usage. They have higher writing apprehension when writing in English than native writers. On a more advanced level, they have trouble mastering the complicated syntactical structures and vocabulary; they can not achieve a high level of cultural accuracy because of their unfamiliarity with idiomatic usage. In teaching nonnative writers, these are the points deserving attention.

With respect to contextual influence, all the subjects of the study have been shaped by their previous schooling experiences and family environments. Current instruction also has had a similar impact upon their writing development. Most of them have a very positive attitude toward the writing courses, toward doing research and producing a research paper; though, in the very beginning, most of the subjects were a little negative toward the courses. It is apparent that systematic instruction on how to do research and how to present it in a sequential way is very important to orient college students to academic discourse communities, which is a prerequisite for them to study in their majors. Given this reality, the instructors of the courses, both for native and nonnative writers, probably need, at the beginning of the term, to explicate the purpose and goal of the courses in order to sweep away the students' doubtful and negative attitudes toward the courses and strengthen their motives to learn to write.

Meanwhile, because grammar has been the major writing problem for all three groups, obviously it can not be overlooked even in a college composition class. In order to empower the grammatical competence of both native and nonnative students, the sentence-combining approach seems to be an appropriate method to let college students practice more on the syntactical and paragraph levels. With an elaborate arrangement, it is believed that sentence-combining techniques can fit well into summary, analysis, and synthesis assignments to improve the writing ability of students.

As for perceptions of writing, both native and nonnative writers display very positive thinking toward writing. Most of them think that writing plays a very influential role in their academic careers. It is a compulsory tool for them to pursue their degrees

and future careers. Meanwhile, reading has a very positive impact on their writing. Part of their writing problems is due to their shortage of reading and critical reading skills. The major difference between native and nonnative speakers lies in the function of writing. All the Korean subjects, for example, treat writing more as a tool to express personal thinking and feelings, while the native group and the Mexican group seem not to view writing as personal.

However, in the perceptions of effective writing instruction, all three groups of subjects have very similar reflections. There is no cultural difference in the recognition of "effectiveness." The essence of effective instruction seems to be universal. What students expect in a writing class and what assists them in making progress are worthy realities to be recognized by all language instructors.

With regard to the motivation and interest of students, it is clear the motivation of students is high when they have an interesting topic to write about; on the contrary, their motivation is down if the topic is not of interest. Some of them also dislike writing under a tightly regulated topic or when being graded. As young adults, most of them like to have a sense of freedom with choices, even in a writing class. Based on this understanding, the principle of writing-across-the-curriculum probably needs to be applied and emphasized. A unified content for students of various academic majors is not really proper because some of them feel so unfamiliar with the content of the field chosen to be practiced. It seems more appropriate to sort out students generally in terms of their similar academic backgrounds instead of just putting all students in one class. With

relevant content to be dealt with in a writing class, as a result, it will be more possible to prepare students well for their academic fields.

The different functions of writer-based writing and reader-based writing are apparent. There is no use arguing which one is better. The point is that they both serve the same goal, but each functions differently during the various stages of writers' developments. Because most nonnative writers have higher writing apprehension when writing English, they like to be free from the anxiety of making grammatical mistakes in writing English. Especially for the Korean group, because of their view of writing, they tend to prefer personal writing to increase their practice quantity, fluency and confidence. In the Mexican group, it is also found that personal writing is welcomed by Raul, Lisa, and Ines; both Raul and Ines are high apprehension writers, but Lisa also likes the informal and friendly atmosphere of personal writing practice. In the early stages of writing development, therefore, personal or free writing is very crucial for students, particularly nonnative speakers, so that they will be free from fear and gain confidence.

However, in a more advanced stage, a reader-based writing plays a significant role in getting students oriented to an academic community, because most of the subjects confirm that they need to write research papers based on background texts and critical reading. It has become very clear that both writer-based and reader-based writing have their specific functions in different developing stages of students' writing. They need to be complementary to each other, rather than conflicting with each other. In the very beginning, the writer-based approach offers a less stressful environment for nonnative

writers or lower level native writers. Later, the reader-based approach continues to provide necessary training in writing based on academic content, with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1984), for getting into the academic discourse. This sequence is consistent with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis and input hypothesis of monitor theory in second language acquisition and writing acquisition. It is also consistent with the principles of writing-across-the-curriculum and content-based writing theory.

Implications of the Study

Implication for Practice

Through this study, the underlying factors affecting the writing development of college students, and the relationship between instruction and their writing development have been revealed, the perceptions of writing and effective instruction of native English speakers and nonnative English speakers have been demonstrated, too. The cultural difference in writing development between native speakers and nonnative speakers deserve the attention of L1 and L2 writing educators. Hopefully, this descriptive study can help L1 and L2 writing teachers build up necessary information of their students in terms of their writing development, writing problems, and perceptions of effective writing instruction, so that they can adjust their teaching approaches and provide flexibility, interaction, and a variety of methods and stimuli in composition classes to meet the needs of college students, and eventually facilitate their writing ability .

Implication for Research

The results of this investigation can contribute to writing research in terms of settings, cultural difference, affective factors, instruction, and classroom interaction -- issues beyond product-based and process-based research. Since writing integrates linguistic, cultural, social and cognitive activities and serves various purposes such as communicative, academic and professional, product-centered and process-centered research can not cover the whole reality about writing. Therefore, a third aspect related to contextual factors: social, cultural, psychological, and pedagogical, is worth investigating to make general theories of writing richer.

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